

drastically only by the conflict of 1956. No other relationship brought Israel such enrichment and security over two decades... France was Israel's mainstay for a full decade and more... The preponderance of French equipment in Israel's armed forces had a powerful emotional effect on the country's youth» (Eban, op. cit., pp. 510-511). In March 1952, Eban asked the US that Israel be included in any Western-oriented Middle East defense pact that might be planned (Green, op. cit., p. 74).

«Between 1968 and 1973 Rabin served as Israeli Ambassador to the USA and in Washington he developed a new concept according to which Israel's security was more dependent on decisions made in the White House than upon decisions taken in government offices in Jerusalem» (Amos Perlmutter, Michael Handel, Uri Bar Joseph, *Two Minutes Over Baghdad*, 1982, p. 49). Israeli dependency became obvious in October 1973 when only a massive military air lift from the US allowed Israel to regain the initiative.

Most of the few instances of Israeli territorial withdrawal have been dictated by international considerations. Eban describes Ben Gurion's policy in this respect as follows: «In 1949 he drew back from northern Sinai rather than incur British armed resistance and American disfavor. He entered the 1956 Sinai campaign... only when he felt assured of support against air attacks on Israel's cities. Two days after declaring that Israel would never abandon the occupied territory or allow foreign troops to enter it, he proclaimed Israel's evacuation in favor of United Nations troops. The United States and the Soviet Union had demanded this, and he saw no course but to comply» (op. cit., p. 516).

In withdrawing from the Sinai in conjunction with the Camp David accords, Israel for the first time acted according to a «double track strategy» defined as combining capacity maximization with threat reduction (Heller, op. cit., pp. 3-4). While the threat reduction involved drawing Egypt out of the Arab confrontation front, the capacity maximization was achieved via massive new levels of US military aid and institutionalized strategic cooperation.

«A leading Israeli defense analyst stated that there are three major factors, apart from geographic borders, that make up the strategic balance from the Israeli perspective: 'Israeli military capabilities as compared to Arab military capabilities; the nature and depth of the American commitment; and the application of military capabilities, especially the question of strategic surprise. Unfortunately, the second is as important as the first and third.' The possibility of a change in the degree and strength of American support is seen as a potential threat of the highest order to Israeli security» (Mroz, op. cit., p. 132).

Israeli dependence on the US has led some to argue that the US can force Israel to make peace; this debate has taken on a new dimension with the onset of the intifada, the attempts of Israel's friends to «save it from itself» and the opening of the US-PLO dialogue. This issue will be examined later in this study; here, we will only cite some pre-intifada facts which mitigate against optimism in this respect: «The Egyptian-American relationship worries the Israelis insofar as it could mean that America will no longer see Israel as its sole, reliable partner in the region. All Israelis realize that Israel's economic well-being and security depend on the continued close

cooperation between the United States and Israel... Many advocates of the peace process believe that once peace is achieved, Israel will need less foreign aid... Israelis are not so certain that the change would be in Israel's best interests» (Mroz, op. cit., p. 57).

The Israeli Labor Party is considered to be most sensitive to the importance of Israel's relations with the West, yet it was a Labor minister who told the *Jerusalem Post* (June 17, 1986), «When it comes to our security or the PLO, we have no option but to differ with the West.»

The dialectics linking Israel with its imperialist backers are extremely complex and dynamic as can be deduced from Moshe Dayan's arguments when he told an assembly of Israeli ambassadors why a defense pact with the US would be harmful: «A defense agreement would only tie our hands... Reprisal actions, which we should be unable to carry out if we were bound by a defense agreement, are the elixir of life for us. Firstly, they oblige the Arab countries to take strict measures to maintain security on the frontiers, and secondly - which is the important point - they help us to maintain tension among the population and in the army. Without this we shall not have a fighting people, and without the structure of a fighting people we shall be lost...» (quoted in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37).

## COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY

Those who view Israeli security in a comprehensive manner are less optimistic about its strategic situation than those who make their judgements in terms of military prowess alone. Below we cover three studies carried out by respected Israeli think tanks.

Mark A. Heller's *A Palestinian State - Implications for Israel* was written under the auspices of the Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University. Heller argues for a Palestinian state (a severely restricted one), as the least dangerous of the options available to Israel for insuring its security, based on the following disadvantages of perpetuating the status quo:

- the economic costs of Israel's defense burden;
- the possibility of new Arab war coalitions emerging in the future;
- the demographic problem involved in absorbing the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the occupation's negative effects on Israel's moral fiber, national cohesion, international relations and Jewish immigration.

Indeed by 1979 and 1980, Jewish emigration had begun to exceed immigration by about 10,000 each year (*Jerusalem Post*, December 11, 1981), and this trend has continued. «Privately Israeli officials acknowledge that the birthrate and the emigration / immigration statistics are most worrisome to them» (Mroz, op. cit., p. 55).

In Heller's view, a durable settlement would offset the geomilitary value of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (usually viewed as the protection which the West Bank in particular offers for Israeli industrial and population centers). The PLO should be brought into the settlement so it would not have interests in undermining it. Rather, this process would weaken and divide the PLO, and busy it with the details of managing a state, like the Arab governments. Heller reasons that the ►